

**From:** Stephen Langford  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
**Date:** 1/11/02 12:52am  
**Subject:** Microsoft Judgement

I am writing to express my opinion that the proposed federal penalties against the Microsoft corporation are too lenient and set a bad precedent.

I find it incredible that the court, the prosecution, and the guilty party must negotiate as equals to define a settlement agreeable to all parties in this case. Microsoft was found guilty of breaking an important law. They have significantly hurt millions of Americans. How many other guilty parties get to negotiate their punishment? It sure seems like Microsoft is not being treated equally under the law.

Some aspects of the penalty are not penalties at all. Forcing Microsoft to buy software and computers for schools gives them an advantage in the educational market, where competitors (e.g., Apple Computer and the suppliers of compatible software) have long had a substantial fraction of the market. The one market where Microsoft has faced significant competition is being made less competitive. Is this a penalty for anti-competitive behavior?

Microsoft has a well-earned reputation for lying, including orchestrating public support for its products in dishonest ways. A ZDNET pole over Christmas is only the most recent example.

<http://news.zdnet.co.uk/story/0,,t269-s2102244,00.html>

Microsoft consistently engages in questionable behavior and is not entitled to leniency on the ground of any honorable track record. If they are not punished, we will have to endure years more of the same or worse. The worst they have to fear is another long trial, with minor penalties even if they are found guilty!

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